

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to claims 1-10 due to minor claim informalities. Finally, the Examiner rejected claims 1-13 and 15-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Anderson et al. 2003/0168875.

Each of these objections and rejections is addressed individually below.

The Objections To The Claims:

The Examiner objected to claims 1-10 due to some minor informalities. These minor informalities have been corrected as set forth above. It is therefore submitted that the objections to the claims have been overcome.

The Section 102(a) Claim Rejections:

The Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as anticipated by Anderson et al. 2003/0168875.

Each of the independent claims (Nos. 1, 11, and 19) requires a method of interchanging modules across multiple vehicle lines. In other words, a module can be attached to a modular vehicle attachment system configured for use in a first vehicle, the first vehicle having a vehicle style and a vehicle model. Then, the module may be detached from that modular vehicle attachment system. Finally, the module may be coupled to another vehicle attachment system configured for use in a second vehicle, the second vehicle having a different vehicle style and vehicle model or a different vehicle style and a different vehicle model. Thereby, the novel invention allows the module of one system configured for a particular style of vehicle to be accommodated into another system configured for a different style or model of vehicle, all without modification to the module.

The Anderson et al. reference merely discloses a method of interchanging components within a single vehicle – not from one vehicle to another and certainly not from one vehicle of one model to another vehicle of another model. Applicant's claimed invention provides significant advantages over Anderson et al. because it allows a modular vehicle attachment system of a single configuration to be constructed for multiple vehicle makes and/or models. The system in Anderson et al. appears to be suited only for a single vehicle.

Anderson discloses that the system 10 includes two generally parallel mounting members 30. (Anderson, Paragraph [0031]). The members 30 have a lateral spacing that is generally fixed for a particular vehicle style, but the spacing may vary between different vehicle styles and models and may have any lateral spacing suitable for mounting articles 20. (Anderson, Paragraph [0031]). However, while it is true that Anderson discloses a system that may be customized for a particular vehicle style and that Anderson further emphasizes that the customization may be different for different vehicle styles and models, Anderson does not teach or suggest that the system configured for one style of vehicle receiving the module designed for a different style, make or model of vehicle without any customization or system modifications.

Moreover, the Applicant urges the Examiner to reconsider the argument presented in the Final Office Action. Specifically, in paragraph 5 located on page 7 of the Final Office Action, it is indicated, "since the modular vehicle attachment system (10) is a modular kit that can be installed in a variety of different vehicles, a second modular vehicle attachment system can be installed in a second vehicle." However, while the Applicant agrees with the Examiner that a module of a system for a particular style of vehicle may be used in another system having the same style of vehicle, the Examiner's rationale is misplaced concerning the modular kit and the reference fails to teach the novel aspects of the invention indicated above. The modular kit as described in the reference is not the system, but is the module that attaches to the system, which is designed for a particular vehicle style, as argued above. Therefore, the system and the modular kit as taught by the reference cannot be the same thing.

It is therefore submitted that all pending claims define over the Anderson et al. reference and that the section 102(a) rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion:

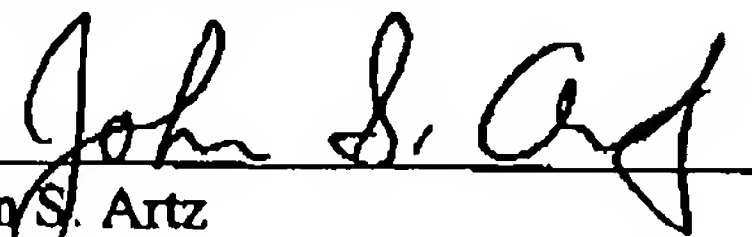
The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter the clarifying amendments for purposes of appeal, considering the only issue on appeal would be whether the Anderson reference taught or suggested the claims as argued above.

It is respectfully submitted that all objections and rejections of record have been overcome and that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is therefore earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner should have any questions, he is urged to contact the undersigned at 248-223-9500.

Respectfully submitted,

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